

I. Objection to Claim 25

The Examiner has objected to claim 25 based on certain informalities. As noted above, claim 25 has been canceled, together with claims 13-24.

II. Rejection of Claims Under 35 U.S.C. § 112

The Examiner rejected claims 13, 14-15, 17-21 and 23 under 35 U.S.C. § 112, second paragraph, for allegedly being indefinite. As noted above the aforementioned claims have been canceled. It is respectfully submitted that the new claims 26-38 comply with all of the requirement of 35 U.S.C. § 112.

III. Rejection Over the Prior Art

The Examiner has rejected claims 13-16, 18-21, and 23 under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) as being unpatentable over Stockl, U.S. Patent No. 3,699,926 (Stockl). Claim 17 is rejected under Stockl and further in view, respectively, of Myrvold, U.S. Patent No. 5,619,832 (Myrvold). Claim 22 is rejected under Stockl and further in view, respectively, Dungle, U.S. Patent No. 4,329,981 (Dungle). Claims 24 and 25 were rejected under Stockl in view of Dickens et al., U.S. Patent No. 4,478,901 (Dickens). It is respectfully submitted that the new claims 26-38 are patentable over the cited references.

Specifically, claim 26 recites third projections, provided on the underside arranged between the second projections, and having, in an unstressed state of the floor covering, a height smaller than a height of the second projections.

The specification, on page 3, lines 4-7 discloses:

The height of these projections is less than the height of those projections on the underside of the floor covering on which it rests in an unstressed state, so that it does not start to act until a specific load (a preset pressure) is applied.

No third projections having height smaller than a height of the second projections in an unstressed state of the covering is shown in Stockl. “Third projections” as formed in Stockl only when a local load is applied to the mat (covering). With a load beneath a preset value, the mat of Stockl would not have any projections.

Under MPEP § 2143 *prima facie* case of obviousness requires that three basic criteria be met.

First, there must be some suggestion or motivation, either in the references or in the knowledge generally available to one of ordinary skill in the art, to modify the reference or to combine reference teachings.

Second, there must be a reasonable expectation of success. Finally, the

prior art reference (or references when combined) must teach or suggest all of the claim limitation.

It is respectfully submitted that the third criterion of *prima facie* obviousness has not been established. As discussed above, Stockl does not disclose third projections projecting from the underside of the floor covering in an unstressed state of the covering.

Since Sotckl fails to disclose each and every feature of independent claim 26, Sotckl, as a matter of law, does not make the present invention, as defined by said independent claim, obvious, and the present invention, as defined by claim 26, is patentable over Stockl.

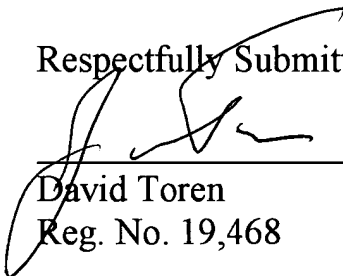
Claims 27-38 depend on claim 26 and are allowable for the same reasons claim 26 is allowable and further because of specific features recited therein which, when taken alone and/or in combination with features recited in Claim 1 are not disclosed or suggested in the prior art.

CONCLUSION

In view of the foregoing, it is respectfully submitted that the application is in condition for allowance, and allowance of the application is respectfully requested.

Should the Examiner require or consider it advisable that the specification, claims and/or drawings be further amended or corrected in formal respects, in order to place the case in condition for final allowance, then it is respectfully requested that such amendment or correction be carried out by Examiner's amendment and the case passed to issue. Alternatively, should the Examiner feel that a personal discussion might be helpful in advancing this case to allowance, the Examiner is invited to telephone the undersigned.

Respectfully Submitted,



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I hereby certify that this correspondence is being deposited with the United States Postal Service as first class mail and addressed to: Commissioner for Patents, Washington, DC 20231 on March 5, 2003.

